



Meeting Notes

Attendees: See List

Date/Time: May 9, 2005

Project No.: 51577.00

Place: Swanzey Town Hall

Re: Homestead Dam Advisory Group

Notes taken by: Bruce DiGennaro

Meeting Overview

The purpose of the meeting was to review the findings of the Feasibility Study and take questions and comments on the draft Feasibility Study from the Advisory Group (AG). After introductions, Pete Walker with VHB initiated the meeting with a summary of findings from the Feasibility Study. The Advisory Group asked questions and provided comments throughout the presentation. After the presentation the group discussed next steps and plans for the Public Information Meeting scheduled for June 8, 2005. A summary of questions and comments is provided below. Questions and comments from the meeting have been group according to major topic areas.

Questions and Comments

Decision Making

How will the Town make a decision regarding the dam?

There is no Town consensus on what should be done. Town wants an objective evaluation upon which to base any decisions. Cost will be a big factor. Expect to go to a Town vote with a recommendation from the selectmen.

Public Information Meeting (PIM) - June 8, 2005

What are the objectives of the Public Information Meeting (PIM)?

How will the PIM be structured? Need to provide context and an opportunity for a back and forth dialog.

Information sessions should be done at the end of the PIM (rather than before or during).

Avoid jargon - keep it simple. Explain expected changes - what will be there and when.

There is confusion amongst the public regarding the choices and ramifications of various choices. Need to provide a clear presentation of the facts - in lay-mans terms

The PIM should be heavily advertised.

The AG could provide walking tours of the dam in the weeks preceding the PIM. Provide education ahead of the meeting. Could also do a site visit the day of the meeting.

Suggest that NHDHR participate in presenting information at the PIM. Present historical perspective. Give equal treatment to historical resource considerations as fisheries and fish passage.

Need better photos and/or drawings for rock ramps for the PIM so the public can visualize this alternative.

Role of the Advisory Group (AG) is to facilitate what gets presented to the public (i.e. ensure that the issues that need to be addressed are brought forth for public review). The AG is not a representation of the community and should not be making a recommendation.

Alternatives

Why is dam removal more efficient for passage than a ladder or by-pass channel? How much more efficient? Can you quantify it?

The Feasibility Study assumes replacement of the dam as a timber crib structure in its current location and at its current height (i.e. "in-kind" replacement). It is possible that it could be replaced with a smaller and/or different structure that may reduce costs of replacement option.

The Feasibility Study should note that there may be additional options for dam replacement other than "in-kind". Such options might serve to preserve historic resources, but at a lower cost. NHDHR has not made a determination that "in-kind" replacement would be required. Need a continuing dialog regarding the range of dam replacement options and estimates of associated constructions costs.

A lower rock ramp alternative might be cheaper and less problematic for passage and maintenance.

Check the O&M calculation associated with the Rock Ramp alternative. Appears there may be an error.

May be underestimating the costs of maintenance and repairs associated with a Rock Ramp alternative. Once in thirty years is overly optimistic.

Would shad use the Rock Ramp?

What's the life expectancy of a rock ramp? How will it be constructed? Where else have such ramps been constructed in NE.

Estimates a few years ago indicated that the dam could be repaired for \$20-25,000 with an equal investment on an annual basis.

Historical Resources

Would ice in winter potentially impact the fish weir under a dam removal alternative?

The current dam is not what was there 50 years ago. The whole structure has been repaired/replaced over the past 20-25 years.

There are no existing historical plans of the dam.

Maybe the dam was never designed to be filled with rock.

NHDHR needs more information to make a determination regarding the dam's historic significance and if it could be repaired (as opposed to replaced).

Resubmit Area Form so a formal determination can be made. When?

Can the Advisory Group review detailed cultural information?

Cultural resource reports should be incorporated in some way into the report, possibly as an appendix. Include a summary of the Area Form in the report (with the full text on a CD).

Thompson Covered Bridge

Could channel restoration be extended upstream of the Thompson Covered Bridge to mitigate scour impacts on the pier?

What's going on with the Thompson Covered Bridge? East side of the bridge has lifted.

What alternatives to protecting the Thompson Covered Bridge center pier were investigated? How was the current recommendation in the report arrived at?

Feasibility Report

How will comments on the draft report be addressed? Will there be a revised document for the PIM?

When does the Feasibility Study become final? How will comments be incorporated?

Page 53 of the report uses the term "after the dam is removed". This phrase should be changed.

Suggest that extra copies of the report, even drafts be given to historical societies - lots of good information that should be preserved.

Miscellaneous

Who does the term "Restoration Partners" refers to? Is it restoration of the river or restoration of the dam?

"Colony Mill" is the local name for the dam in Keene.

Please explain "head cutting"? Won't it ultimately match the previous channel?

What if the Corps built another flood control dam on the river upstream? How would that affect the analysis and findings of the Feasibility Study?

Are there studies of dam removals that look retrospectively to see if they got what they expected in terms of fish restoration?

Any examination of other case studies should include cases where removal was considered but did not happen, and why. Typically a function of what the dam owner wants to and/or is willing to do.

Meeting Attendees

Deb Loiselle	NHDES - Dam Bureau
Grace Levergood	NHDES - Dam Bureau
Jim Turek	NOAA Restoration Center
Eric Derleth	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Neidermyer	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Beth Fox	Town Administrator
Bob Beauregard	Selectman
Scott Self	Swanzey Planning Board
Lee Dunham	Swanzey DPW
Gabe Gries	NHF&G
Doug Brown	Homestead Woolen Mills
James McConaha	NHDHR
James Garvin	NHDHR
Linda Wilson	NHDHR
Sylvester Karasinski	Swanzey Fire Chief
Steve Stepenuck	Swanzey Conservation Commission, ARLAC
John Asseng	ARLAC
Richard Scaramelli	Swanzey Master Plan Committee
Bruce DiGennaro	Kleinschmidt Associates
Mike Morrison	Swanzey Conservation Commission
Steve Knowlton	Resident - Spring Street, W. Swanzey
Nancy Robinson	Resident - Spring Street, W. Swanzey
Sara Carbonneau	Town Planner
Pete Walker	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB)